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STATE PASS EUR/SCE MIKE FOOKS AND ANNA STINCHCOMB

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [BK](#) [EU](#) [BE](#)
SUBJECT: BELGIUM:ENGAGING EU ON BOSNIA

REF: STATE 113894

Classified By: Political Economic Counselor Richard Eason for Reasons 1
.5 (B) and (D)

¶1. (C) MFA Director for Southeast Europe Luc Liebaut provided to Poloff October 27, an informative and lengthy readout of European thinking on Bosnia. Liebaut said the EU and Belgium were largely in agreement over the main points in reftel demarche, with a slightly nuanced view of the 5-Plus-2 agenda, and two critiques of demarche points.

¶2. (C) POINTS OF AGREEMENT: Liebaut said the EU would like to see the continuation of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) for a short time period, likely through March. The EU would be satisfied by a rough adherence to the 5-Plus-2 agenda, a transition to a European Special Representative (EUSR) based on the Stability Association Agreement, and maintaining the military mission until after the OHR - EUSR transition. Liebaut argued that the EUSR mechanism and its "guided integration process" was the best course for Bosnia's future; the EU would be able to help the three communities focus on what is necessary to achieve EU membership, rather than the political gamesmanship and ethnic pandering currently endemic in Bosnian politics. The EUSR would be able to issue "yellow cards" by implicating those individuals slowing the EU integration process. On the 5-Plus-2 agenda, the last remaining issues are a solution for the Brcko region and a positive political assessment. The MFA notes that an opinion is subjective, and the Muslim insistence on a return of all refugees might not be possible.

¶3. (C) QUESTIONS AND CRITIQUES: Liebaut asked why the U.S. is opposed to constitutional changes before completion of the 5 2 agenda. From the European perspective, constitutional changes can be made if the Bosnian people wish. Indeed the EU believes that constitutional reform must occur; Bosnia must find a more effective structure to move towards EU integration. On the critique side, Liebaut said that the multiple demarche points against Dodik, versus one for Silajdzic, was inappropriate. The current political problems rest with both leaders, not five to one Dodik.

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